

## Message Text

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21

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00

DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 /051 W

----- 029058

R 060300Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4189

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 1 OF 2 KUALA LUMPUR 4494

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PGOV, MY

SUBJECT: MALAYSIAN ISLAMIC PARTY'S ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY: FIRST DAY

1. SUMMARY. PAN MALAYSIAN ISLAMIC PARTY, IMPORTANT COMPONENT PARTY IN RULING NATIONAL FRONT (NF) COALITION, NOW HOLDING THREE DAY ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN KUALA LUMPUR. MAIN ITEM ON AGENDA IS SUBJECT OF PARTY'S CONTINUED PARTICIPATION IN NF IN VIEW OF CONTINUED GRUMBLINGS AMONG MID-AND LOWER-LEVEL ECHELONS OVER LACK OF DIRECT BENEFITS FROM COALITION. ADDITIONAL FOCUS, ECHOING LAST MONTHS UMNO GENERAL ASSEMBLY, IS ON NATIONAL SECURITY, ESPECIALLY INTERNAL COMMUNIST THREAT, WHICH PMIP BELIEVES CAN BE COUNTERED BY SUPPLEMENTING MATERIAL UPGRADING OF ARMED FORCES' CAPABILITY WITH ADHERENCE TO "SACRED PRINCIPLES OF ISLAM" BY BOTH SECURITY PERSONNEL AND CITIZENRY. FOLLOWING FIRST DAY'S SESSION OF PMIP AND ITS WOMEN'S, YOUTH, RELIGIOUS, AND ELDERS' FACTIONS, PRESS REPORTING INDICATED PARTY LEADERSHIP IS EMPHASIZING MERITS OF CONTINUED ASSOCIATION WITH NATIONAL FRONT WHILE CITING SCOPE FOR RECEIVING A BETTER DEAL, ESPECIALLY AT STATE LEVELS. POSSIBILITY REMAINS, HOWEVER, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THAT PARTY DISSIDENTS WILL JOIN WITH CERTAIN DISAFFECTED

ELEMENTS OF UMNO TO FORM A NEW, MORE CONSERVATIVE ISLAMIC PARTY, WHOSE NAME, ACCORDING TO RUMORS, WOULD BE THE "ISLAMIC PROGRESSIVE PARTY." END SUMMARY.

2. OVER 350 DELEGATES FROM 109 BRANCHES OF THE PAN MALAYSIAN ISLAMIC PARTY (PMIP, OR PAS, AS IT IS ALTERNATIVELY KNOWN) ARE ATTENDING THE THREE-DAY PMIP ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN KUALA LUMPUR WHICH BEGAN AUGUST 4. PMIP YOUTH, WOMEN'S, RELIGIOUS, AND ELDERS COMPONENTS AS WELL AS THE PARENT BODY MET TO DISCUSS VARIOUS MATTERS, MOST PROMINENT BEING THE MATTER OF PARTY'S CONTINUED PARTICIPATION IN THE NATIONAL FRONT (NF) COALITION. OTHER IMPORTANT ISSUES ON THE AGENDA INCLUDE NATIONAL SECURITY, THE ROLE OF ETHNIC MALAY'S IN THE NATIONAL ECONOMY, ROLE OF ISLAM IN THE NATIONAL LIFE, AND REVIEW OF MALAYSIA'S RELATIONS WITH THE PRC.

3. IN ADDITION TO PMIP DELEGATES, INVITATIONS WERE EXTENDED TO OTHER MEMBERS OF THE NF TO SEND UP TO THREE REPRESENTATIVES EACH TO OBSERVE THE PROCEEDINGS. THE "BANNED IN BRUNEI" PARTY RAKYAT BRUNEI (BRUNEI PEOPLE'S PARTY) ALSO WAS INVITED TO SEND REPRESENTATIVES, AND, ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS, HAD ACCEPTED.

4. LOCAL PRESS REPORTED PMIP PRESIDENT DATUK HAJI MOHAMED ASRI BIN MUDA, MINISTER OF LAND AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT, TOLD DELEGATES THAT ALTHOUGH PMIP HAD NOT OBTAINED ALL IT HAD HOPED FROM PARTICIPATION IN THE NF, ON THE WHOLE THE PARTY HAD BENEFITED FROM THIS ASSOCIATION. HE CITED THREE FACTORS AS WEIGHING HEAVILY IN FAVOR OF PMIP MEMBERSHIP IN THE NF: (A) IT HELPS ENSURE MALAY UNITY AND SOLIDARITY, ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT FROM THE SECURITY STANDPOINT; (B) DIRECT BENEFITS ACCRUING TO THE PARTY FOLLOWING ITS ENTRY INTO THE NF IN 1973, INCLUDING PARTICIPATION BY PMIP MEMBERS IN LEGISLATIVE AND EXECUTIVE BRANCHES OF GOM, STATUTORY BODIES AND OTHER QUASI-GOVERNMENT AGENCIES; AND (C) IT PROVIDES A MEANS FOR INCULCATING ISLAMIC VALUES DIRECTLY THROUGH THE GOVERNMENT. ACCORDING TO ASRI, PMIP PARTICIPATION IN THE NF CONTRIBUTED GREATLY TO POLITICAL STABILITY AT THE NATIONAL WEVEL. NONETHELESS, HE CONTENDED PMIP REMAINS DISSATISFIED WITH LACK OF HARMONY WITH OTHER NF COMPONENTS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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(ESPECIALLY UMNO-BY IMPLICATION) "PARTICULARLY AT THE MIDDLE AND LOWER LEVELS" OF THE PARTIES. FINALLY, HE CONTENDED THAT (MALAY) NATIONALISM ALONE NO LONGER IS A SUFFICIENT BULWARK AGAINST COMMUNISM AND MUST BE SUPPLEMENTED BY EQUIPPING THE ARMED FORCES AND THE PUBLIC WITH PROPER ISLAMIC SPIRIT AS WELL AS MILITARY STRENGTH IN MATERIAL SENSE.

5. PMIP YOUTH WING REPORTEDLY DEBATED THREE RESOLUTIONS

ON SECURITY, ENSURING ETHNIC MALAY PARTICIPATION IN ECONOMY,  
AND URGING CAUTION ON THE GOVERNMENT IN BRANDING RELIGIONS  
LEADERS AS COMMUNISTS. ON FIRST RESOLUTION, YOUTH LEADER  
ENCIK MUSTAPHA ALI (PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO MINISTRY OF  
TRADE AND INDUSTRY) URGED THE GOVERNMENT TO DEAL FIRMLY  
WITH COMMUNIST AND SUBVERSIVE ELEMENTS AND NOT RPT NOT TO  
RELEASE THEM UPON THEIR MAKING CONFESSIONS OR OTHERWISE  
RECATING, WHICH HE SAID WOULD VITIATE "THE CONCEPT OF TOTAL  
WAR AGAINST THE COMMUNIST." RE THE BORDER SITUATION WITH  
THAILAND, MUSTAPHA EXPRESSED HIS ORGANIZATION'S DISAPPOINTMENT  
WITH THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE MALAYSIAN POLICE FIELD  
FORCE (PFF) CONTINGENT FROM THE BETONG SALIENT OF SOUTHERN  
THAILAND IN JUNE AND URGED THE GOM " TO BE MORE CAUTIOUS WHEN  
DRAFTING A NEW BORDER AGREEMENT WITH THAILAND." HE ALSO CALLED  
FOR THE GOM TO MAKE A FIRM EXPRESSION OF ITS POLITICES "REGARDING  
THE MUSLIM STRUGGLE IN SOUTERN THAILAND."

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6. ACCORDING TO A JULY 19 MALAY LANGUAGE PRES REPORT, A  
MOVEMENT IS UNDERWAY BY SOME MALAY INTELLECTUALS,  
RELIGIOUS LEADERS, AND POLITICIANS, INCLUDING SOME FORMER

MEMBERS OF THE PMIP AND UMNO WHO ARE "NO LONGER WANTED IN THE PARTY," TO CREATE A MALAY OPPOSITION PARTY THAT WOULD BE CALLED THE "ISLAMIC PROGRESSIVE PARTY." SUCH RUMORS HAVE BEEN MAKING THE ROUNDS FOR SOME TIME BUT HAVE INCREASED FOLLOWING EXCLUSION OF FORMER UMNO YOUTH LEADER DATUK HARUN IDRIS FROM UMNO LAST MARCH.

7. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH ITS MEMBERS OFTEN FEEL SLIGHTED, ESPECIALLY AT THE STATE AND LOCAL LEVEL OVER LACK OF TANGIBLE BENEFITS FROM NF MEMBERSHIP, PMIP HAS DONE WELL AT THE FEDERAL LEVEL, SEVERAL OF ITS TOP LEADERS OCCUPYING CABINET OR SUB-CABINET POSTS. ASRI'S PORTFOLIO IS PARTICULARLY IMPORANT FROM THE MALAY PERSPECTIVE AS NUMEROUS LAND SCHEMES UNDERTAKEN BY THE FEDERAL LAND DEVELOPMENT AGENCY (FELDA) FALL UNDER HIS MINISTRY'S JURISDICTION. OF THE 13 PMIP MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT (OUT OF TOTAL OF 154 MP'S) TWO ARE FULL MINISTERS, ONE A DEPUTY MINISTER, AND TWO ARE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARIES. NONETHELESS, RESTIVENESS REMAINS AMONG RANK AND FILE WHO SEE THEIR AMBITIONS THWARTED BY THE CONSTRAINTS ON PARTY RECRUITMENT OR GEOGRAPHIC EXPANSION, ETC., POSED BY NF MEMBERSHIP, AND WHO ARE DISTRESSED BY INADEQUATE ACCEPTANCE OF ISLAMIC PRINCIPLES BY NF AS A BASIS FOR NATIONAL POLITICAL BEHAVIOR. FINALLY, COMMENTS ON THAILAND BY PMIP YOUTH ARE UNSURPRISING IN VIEW OF PMIP'S LONG STANDING SUPPORT OF THAI MUSLIM CAUSE (PMIP IS PARTICULARLY STRONG IN THE BORDER STATES). UNDERHILL

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## Message Attributes

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